

made the keynote address at the 2004 Republican National Convention; Prime Minister Ayad Allawi of the Iraqi Interim Government; and Prime Minister Junichiro

Koizumi of Japan. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of the First Lady, who introduced the President.

Remarks in Parkersburg, West Virginia September 5, 2004

The President. Thank you all for coming. Thanks for taking time out of your Sunday to say hello. I appreciate you giving me the chance to come and tell you I want your vote. I believe you got to get out amongst the people and ask for the vote, and that's what I'm doing.

It's great to be back in West Virginia. It seems like I'm making a habit coming here. It ought to be clear to the people of this State that I want to carry West Virginia again. And it's clear to me, having been here a lot and seeing the enthusiasm and the size of the crowds, with your help, we will carry West Virginia again.

I like this State. It's the home of really good people, beautiful scenery, and good hunting and fishing.

I wish Laura were traveling with me today. She's at home. She's been on the road a lot and—what a great speech she gave the other night in New York City. I'm really proud of her. She's a great mom, a wonderful wife, a terrific First Lady. I'm going to give you some reasons why I think you ought to put me back in, but perhaps the most important one of all is so that Laura will be First Lady for 4 more years.

I want to thank my friend Dick Cheney for working so hard. He's a great Vice President. I'm proud to be running with him. You know, he doesn't have the waviest hair in the race. *[Laughter]* But I picked him because of his experience and judgment and because he can get the job done.

I want to thank Shelley Moore Capito for joining us, the fine Congresswoman

from West Virginia. I appreciate you coming, Shelley Moore.

I want to thank your Mayor, Mayor Jimmy Colombo. Thanks for coming, Jimmy. I'm proud you're here. I'm honored you're here, sir. Next time I come back, we'll make sure you got a seat. *[Laughter]* But I'm proud you're here. Thank you, sir, for coming.

You know, there's a—like Jimmy, there's a lot of Democrats here in the crowd, and I want to thank you all for coming. See, my message is for everybody. A safer, stronger, better America is for every citizen of this country. I think old Zell Miller set a pretty good tempo for Democrats all across the country. He made it clear it's all right to come and support the Bush ticket. So if you're a Democrat and you're here, welcome. If you're an independent and you're here, welcome. If you're a Republican and you're here, thank you for your help.

I want to thank all those who are running for office who are here, but most importantly, I want to thank you all. I also want to thank the folks at Parkersburg High. I want to thank Ralph Board, the principal, and the students at Parkersburg High. I want to thank the community band that is here. Thank you all for coming.

Looks like you all take high school football pretty seriously, kind of like where I was raised. There's nothing like Friday night football. I want to thank—did you win last night—or last Friday? You did? Good. That's great. Now go do your homework. *[Laughter]*

I want to thank the West Virginia Army National Guard 1092d Engineer Combat Battalion. Thanks for the good job you did in Iraq. I'm proud of your service.

Not only am I here to ask for your vote, I'm here to ask for your help. See, we have a duty in this country to vote. And I would hope you would go out and register your friends and neighbors and remind them that in a democracy, free citizens must participate. And then when you get them headed toward the polls, just remind them that George Bush and Dick Cheney are ready to lead this country for 4 more years.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. Listen, I'm looking forward to campaigning in West Virginia and Ohio and all around this country. And as I do so, I'll tell you where I stand, I'll tell you what I believe, and I'll tell you where I'll lead this country. I believe that every child can learn and every school must teach. That's why we passed Federal education reforms to raise the bar, to trust local people with the decisions in the schools, to measure early so we can correct problems before it's too late. We're closing the achievement gap in America, and we're not turning back.

I believe we have a moral responsibility to honor our citizens with good health care. That's why I went to Washington, DC, to strengthen Medicare. The old system said, "We'll pay for heart surgery at \$100,000 or so, but we won't pay for the medicine to prevent the heart surgery from happening in the first place." Beginning in 2006, our seniors will get prescription drug coverage in Medicare, and we're not turning back.

I believe in the energy and innovation of America, workers and farmers and ranchers and small-business owners, so we unleashed that energy with the largest tax cut in a generation.

We've overcome a recession, corporate scandals, terrorist attack. Our economy is

growing, and it is getting stronger. Just this past week, we received the jobs report for August. America added 144,000 new jobs last month. Plus 60,000 jobs upward revision for the previous 2 months, we've added over 1.7 million new jobs since August of '03. The national unemployment rate is 5.4 percent, and the unemployment rate in the great State of West Virginia is 5.2 percent. Our economic plan is working.

I believe the most solemn duty of the President is to protect the American people. If America shows uncertainty and weakness in this decade, the world will drift toward tragedy. This is not going to happen on my watch. I'm running with a clear and positive plan to build a safer world and a more hopeful America. I'm running with a compassionate conservative philosophy: Government should help people improve their lives, not try to run their lives. And I believe this Nation wants steady, principled, consistent leadership, and that is why, with your help, we're going to score a great national victory in November.

The other night when I was speaking in New York, I told the American people I understand we're living in a changing world. It's a different world from the world of our parents and grandparents. People are changing jobs quite frequently. The workplace has changed. Many women work not only inside their homes but outside the home as well. It's a changing world. And yet, the fundamental systems of America were built for yesterday, not tomorrow. Our Tax Code, health coverage, pension plans, and worker training were all set up for a bygone era. And I believe we need to change those systems to help the American people realize their dreams.

But any hopeful society is one in which the economy is growing. To create more jobs here in America, America must be the best place in the world to do business. That means we've got to have—that means we need legal reform so our small businesses don't have to shut their doors because of

frivolous lawsuits. That means we need—Congress needs to get an energy plan to my desk, which encourages conservation, renewables, but also encourages clean coal technology. In order to keep jobs here in America, we must be less dependent on foreign sources of energy.

To keep jobs here in America, we must open up markets overseas for our entrepreneurs and manufacturers and farmers and ranchers. We open up our markets, and that's good for you. What I tell other countries like China is, "You treat us the way we treat you." We can compete with anybody, anytime, anywhere if the rules are fair.

In order to make sure we keep jobs here, we got to be wise about how we spend your money, and we got to keep your taxes low. We have a difference of opinion on taxes in this campaign. My opponent has promised to raise some taxes. That's a promise politicians tend to keep.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. This Labor Day weekend, it is important for America's workers to know that my opponent wants to tax your jobs. His plan to raise taxes on those at the top end of the income tax scale will raise taxes for the 900,000 small businesses and entrepreneurs who pay at the individual rate and who are creating most of the new jobs in our changing economy. Raising taxes will stifle job creation. The way to get more Americans working is to support the small businesses who are creating 70 percent of the new jobs in America.

I'll tell you what else we've got to fix is the Tax Code. It is a complicated mess. It's full of special interest loopholes. Americans spend about 6 billion hours of paperwork and headache every year on the Tax Code. In a new term, I will lead a bipartisan effort to reform and simplify and make fair the Federal Tax Code.

We will expand access to our community colleges so workers will have the skills necessary to fill the jobs of the 21st century.

You know that most new jobs in America are filled by people with at least 2 years of college, yet only one in four students gets there. In our high schools, we'll fund early intervention programs to help students at risk. We'll place a new focus on math and science. Over time, we'll require a rigorous exam before graduation. By raising performance in our high schools and expanding Pell grants for low- and middle-income families, we will help more Americans start their career with a college diploma.

In a time of change, we'll do more to make quality health care available and affordable. More than one-half of the uninsured are small-business employees and their families. In order to make sure these families get help, we must allow small firms to join together to purchase insurance at the discounts available to big companies.

We will offer tax credits to encourage small businesses and their employees to set up health savings accounts. I will ensure every poor county in America has a community or rural health center. In all we do to improve health care in America, we will make sure the decisions are made by doctors and patients, not by Government officials in Washington, DC.

Talk about an issue that's important here in West Virginia and around our country, and that is, these frivolous lawsuits are running up the cost of your health care, and they're running good docs out of business. See, I don't think you can be pro-patient, pro-hospital, and pro-doctor and pro-plaintiff-attorney at the same time. I think you have to choose. My opponent made his choice, and he put him on the ticket.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. I have made my choice: I am for medical liability reform—now.

In a new term, we'll continue to promote an ownership society. Listen, in changing times, if you own something, you bring stability to your life. We're going to expand homeownership in America. Do you realize homeownership is at an alltime high in

America? There's nothing better than more American citizens opening the door to the place where they live and saying, "Welcome to my home. Welcome to my piece of property."

As well we've got to make sure our retirement systems work well, particularly for younger workers. If you're a baby boomer or older, Social Security will take care of you. It will meet your promise. But if you're a younger worker, you better take a good look at the balance sheet of Social Security. I believe young workers ought to be able to take some of their own taxes and put it in a personal account in order to make sure the retirement system is around for them, a personal account they'll call a nest egg of their own that Government cannot take away.

We have a different philosophy in this race. If you listen carefully to the fellow I'm running against, he's talking about expanding Government. He wants to increase Government and the role of Government. That's different from our philosophy. I believe the proper role of Government is to increase opportunity, so citizens can realize their full potential and realize the great dream of the United States of America.

In a world of change, some things don't change, the values we try to live by, courage and compassion, reverence and integrity. In a changing world, we must support the institutions that are important to our society, our families, our schools, our religious congregations. Because a caring society will value its weakest members, we must make a place for the unborn child. Because religious charities provide a safety net of mercy and compassion, our Government must never discriminate against them. Because the union of a man and woman deserves an honored place in our society, I support the protection of marriage against activist judges. And I will continue to appoint Federal judges who know the difference between personal opinion and the strict interpretation of the law.

This election will also determine how America responds to the continuing danger of terrorism. Since the terrible morning of September the 11th, we have fought with the terrorists across the Earth, not for pride, not for power, but because the lives of our citizens depend on it. Our strategy is clear. We'll defend the homeland. We'll stay on the offensive. We'll strike the terrorists abroad, so we do not have to face them here at home. And we'll work to promote liberty around the world, particularly the broader Middle East. And if we're strong and if we got faith in our values, we will prevail.

Listen, our strategy is succeeding. Four years ago, Afghanistan was the home base of Al Qaida; Pakistan was a transit point for terrorist groups; Saudi was a fertile ground for terrorist fundraising; Libya was pursuing nuclear weapons; Iraq was a gathering threat; and Al Qaida was largely unchallenged as it planned attacks. Now, because we acted, the Government of a free Afghanistan is fighting terror; Pakistan is capturing terrorists; Saudi Arabia is making raids and arrests; Libya is dismantling its weapons program; the army of a free Iraq is fighting for freedom; and more than three-quarters of Al Qaida's key members and associates have been brought to justice. We have led. Many have joined, and America and the world are safer.

This progress involved careful diplomacy, clear moral purpose, and some tough decisions. And the toughest came on Iraq. We knew Saddam Hussein's record of aggression and support for terror. We knew that. We knew his long history of pursuing and even using weapons of mass destruction. And we know that after September the 11th, we must think differently about how to defend our country. We must take threats seriously before they fully materialize.

In Saddam Hussein, we saw a threat. I went to the United States Congress. They looked at the same intelligence, looked at the same history of Saddam Hussein, and

came to the same conclusion. They saw a threat, including my opponent, who looked at the same intelligence I looked at and concluded that Saddam Hussein was a threat. And the Congress voted the authorization of force.

Before the Commander in Chief commits troops into harm's way, we must exhaust all other options to solve a problem. And so I tried the diplomatic route. I went to the United Nations. I said to the United Nations, I said, "We see a threat." They looked at the same intelligence, remembered the same history, and with a 15-to-nothing vote in the United Nations Security Council said to Saddam Hussein, "Disclose, disarm, or face serious consequences."

The free world spoke, but as he had for over a decade, Saddam Hussein wasn't interested in what the free world said. See, he got used to ignoring the demands of the free world. As a matter of fact, when they sent weapons inspectors into the country, he systematically deceived the inspectors. So I had a choice to make: Either take the word of a madman and forget the lessons of September the 11th, or defend this country. Given that choice, I will defend America every time.

Because we acted to defend our country, 50 million people in Afghanistan and Iraq are now free—50 million people. You know, it's amazing what's happening in Afghanistan. That was a country where the Taliban would not allow many young girls to go to school and take their moms out in the public square and whip them if they didn't like the way they were thinking or behaving. These people were barbaric. It's hard for the American mind to comprehend how backwards and barbaric these people were. Today, over 10 million citizens have registered to vote in the October Presidential elections in Afghanistan.

Freedom is powerful—freedom is powerful. Iraq now has a strong Prime Minister, a National Council, and national elections are scheduled there in January. Our Nation

is standing with the people of Afghanistan and Iraq, because when America gives its word, America must keep its word.

We're also doing because it's in our interest. Free societies in the Middle East will be hopeful societies which no longer feed resentments and breed violence for export. Free governments in the Middle East will fight terrorists instead of harboring them, and that helps us keep the peace. Our mission in those two countries is clear. We'll help new leaders to train their armies so the Afghan people and the Iraqi people can stand up for freedom in their own societies. We'll help elections come forward. We'll get them on the path to stability and democracy as quickly as possible. And then our troops will return home with the honor they have earned.

I've had the privilege of meeting with those who defend our country here at home and around the world. We have got a fantastic United States military. And I want to thank all of the veterans who are here today for having such—set such a great example for the men and women of the United States military.

We made a commitment to our troops and to the loved ones—and to their loved ones—that we'll support them in their missions. That's why I went to the Congress last September and proposed supplemental funding for body armor and spare parts, ammunition, fuel, that which is necessary to support our men and women in Afghanistan and Iraq. It's an \$87 billion request. It was necessary. As a matter of fact, the Congress believed that. It was—there was overwhelming support, and so overwhelming only 12 United States Senators voted against it, 2 of whom are my opponent and his runningmate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. As a matter of fact, only four United States Senators voted to authorize the use of force and then voted against funding our troops. Two of those Senators were my opponent and his runningmate.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. So they asked him, they said, “You know, why didn’t you vote?” He said, “Well, I actually did vote for the \$87 billion before I voted against it.”

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Then they pressed him further, and he said he’s proud of his vote, and then he said, “Well, the whole thing is a complicated matter.” There’s nothing complicated about supporting our troops in combat.

Over the next 4 years, I’ll continue to work with our allies and friends to promote freedom and peace. We’ve got a great coalition put together; nearly 40 countries are involved in Afghanistan, some 30 in Iraq. But I will never turn over America’s national security decisions to leaders of other countries.

I believe in the transformational power of liberty. That’s why I say these are historic times. The world is changing. As liberty moves on, so will peace, the peace we all want. You know, I like to tell about my business with Prime Minister Koizumi; he’s the Prime Minister of Japan. You know, we sit at a table together, and we’re talking about peace, talking about North Korea and how to keep the peace, talking about Iraq and how to keep the peace—an interesting conversation when you think about it, because it wasn’t all that long ago that my dad and your dads and granddads were fighting the Japanese as a sworn enemy. And yet because, after World War II, Harry Truman and others believed that liberty could transform countries and transform people, because they held firm to the values of America, Japan today is no longer an enemy. It’s an ally in keeping the peace. Someday an American President will be sitting down with a duly elected leader of Iraq; they’ll be talking about how to make the world a more peaceful place.

I believe that. I believe people long to be free. I believe people, if given a chance to be free, will choose freedom. I believe

that because America is not—freedom is not America’s gift to the world; freedom is the Almighty God’s gift to each man and woman in this world.

For all Americans, these years in our history will always stand apart. There are quiet times in the life of a nation when little is expected of its leaders. This isn’t one of those times. This is a time that requires firm resolve, clear vision, and a deep, abiding faith in the values that make us a great country.

None of us will ever forget that week when one era ended and another began. On September the 14th, 2001, I stood in the ruins of the Twin Towers. It’s a day I will never forget. There were workers in hardhats there yelling at me, “Whatever it takes.” A guy grabbed me by the arm and said, “Do not let me down.” Ever since that day, I wake up every morning thinking about how to better protect our country. I will never relent in defending America, whatever it takes.

We’ve got a vision and a plan to make America a safer place and a more hopeful place for every citizen. Four years ago, I traveled your State and I said if you gave me the great honor of holding this office, I would uphold the honor and dignity of the office to which I had been elected. With your help, with your hard work, I will do so for the next 4 years.

God bless. Thank you all for coming. Appreciate you being here. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:33 p.m. at Parkersburg High School. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor Jimmy Colombo of Parkersburg, WV; Senator Zell Miller of Georgia, who made the keynote address at the 2004 Republican National Convention; Prime Minister Ayad Allawi of the Iraqi Interim Government; and Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan.

Letter to the Speaker of the House of Representatives Transmitting a Supplemental Budget Request To Support Comprehensive Response and Recovery Efforts After Hurricane Charley
September 6, 2004

Dear Mr. Speaker:

On August 27th, I announced that I would submit a supplemental request to the Congress of approximately \$2 billion to pay for comprehensive response and recovery efforts after Hurricane Charley. This was in addition to response and recovery efforts being undertaken by federal government agencies using existing resources and programs.

Because of the severity and timing of Hurricane Frances, I ask the Congress to consider expeditiously the enclosed request, totaling \$2.0 billion, for an emergency FY 2004 supplemental appropriation for the Department of Homeland Security.

I hereby designate this proposal in the amount requested herein as an emergency requirement. This request responds to urgent needs associated with Hurricanes Charley and Frances in Florida and other

affected areas, and will enable the Federal Emergency Management Agency to respond to additional disasters should they occur.

The enclosed request requires immediate action by the Congress to ensure that the immediate response efforts to these recent disasters continue uninterrupted. I anticipate making a further request in the coming days that will provide for a comprehensive response and recovery effort addressing the impact of both of these hurricanes. In addition, federal government agencies will continue their response and recovery efforts using existing resources and programs.

The details of this request are set forth in the enclosed letter from the Director of the Office of Management and Budget.

Sincerely,

GEORGE W. BUSH

Remarks in Poplar Bluff, Missouri
September 6, 2004

The President. Thank you all. Thanks for coming. I'm glad to be here celebrating Labor Day with you. It's good to be in a part of the world where the cowboy hats outnumber the ties. Thanks for coming. You know, you might have heard I got an interesting invitation to come here to Poplar Bluff, Missouri. I get a lot of invitations. I've never gotten one with 10,000 signatures on it. But I was somewhat surprised when we choppered over here, because it looks like there's a lot more people than 10,000 that have come today.

Thanks for coming. Thanks for having me. It's a beautiful part of the world. Peo-

ple are good people here. I'm proud to be here to ask for your vote. You sure know how to make a President feel welcome.

And I know you will join me in wishing President Clinton the very best wishes in the recovery from his surgery. His surgery went well, which is good news. And we just pray for a speedy recovery for the former President.

My one regret today is I wish Laura were here to see the size of this crowd. You know, she was a public school librarian when I asked her to marry me. She was working at an elementary school, and she